

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Bell, Inc.

South Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Stop! Look! Focus on Lean!

Client Profile:

Bell Inc. is one of the largest and fastest growing independent folding carton companies in North America. A manufacturer of retail packaging products and overnight letter envelopes, Bell has been located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, since 1920, currently employing approximately 200 employees. Bell has a wide customer base across the United States, concentrating a majority of their marketing efforts on the food industry. Over the years, the company has seen steady growth and since 1991 has increased business six-fold. Bell has invested in the latest converting technology and maintains an entrepreneurial, customer-focused organization. The current single manufacturing location provides 130,000 square feet of space; Bell is currently completing transition into a new manufacturing facility which will increase manufacturing space by three times. This is to accommodate significant growth and installation of a new printing press to expand capacity.

Situation:

Bell's owner, Mark Graham, and his staff stopped in 2003 to take a careful look at the company's performance. As a result of this focused review, they saw that there were opportunities to decrease wastes in time and wastes in materials and improve profitability. "We were successful and profitable but saw that our production could be more efficient to provide increased bottom line results," said General Manager, Marianne Von Seggern. The company contacted the South Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SDMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

The partnership between the SDMEP and Bell began in November of 2003 when the two parties teamed together to design and begin implementing a plan to assist in solving the waste issues identified during the review. Since that time the client has embarked on a strategy to ensure that all employees receive a minimum of eight hours of Lean training to introduce the various concepts of Lean Enterprise and to begin the necessary cultural change toward a continuous improvement mindset. A number of focused projects have helped the client to implement Lean manufacturing principles. These projects included Value Stream Mapping, 5-S, Total Preventive Maintenance, Set-up Reduction and Lean Office. In the future the client and SDMEP will continue to work together to assist Bell in achieving the company's long-term productivity objectives.

Results:

- * Reduced plant inefficiencies by 50 percent.
- * Reduced excess spoilage by 98 percent.
- * Reduced down time by 30 percent.
- * Improved cleanliness and organization of facility.

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* Improved productivity, safety and ergonomics for workforce.

Testimonial:

"I expect the company to continue to work with SDMEP. It is going to be an ongoing relationship. It's not that we can't work without them, but we found that it is good to bring in someone from the outside to assist us in training our employees and to assist in the various improvement projects for continued enhancements to productivity and profitability. "

Marianne Von Seggern, General Manager